

Appl. No. 09/319,649
Amdt. dated November 1, 2003
Reply to Office action of July 16, 2003

In the Claims:

No claim amendments are made herein.

1. (previously amended) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs, in an audience data obtaining device which uses a computer, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining, from outside, TV program table data for an area where a viewer resides, said TV program table data including channel information and time information for each of TV programs planned to be broadcast in that area;

detecting a channel that is being viewed by the viewer;

detecting times at which a viewing of the channel is started and ended;

identifying a program ID of a currently viewed program from said TV program table data by comparing said detected channel and a current time with the channel and time information of said TV program table data;

obtaining audience data which include at least the program ID and viewed time information of the viewed program based on said TV program table data and results of the detecting of times, said viewed time information including at least one of (1) a view start time of each viewed program, (2) a view end time of each viewed program, and (3) a difference between the view start time and the view end time; and

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transferring, via the Internet to a collection center, the obtained audience data along with ID data of the viewer.

2. (previously amended) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 1, wherein said step of obtaining TV program table data includes automatically and regularly obtaining said TV program table data by use of the Internet or a broadcasting medium, and said step of transferring includes automatically and regularly performing the transmission to the collection center.

3. (previously amended) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 1, wherein said step of obtaining TV program table data includes automatically obtaining said TV program table data, and said step of transferring includes automatically performing the transmission to the collection center, both by making use of opportunities of the viewer's accessing the Internet.

4. (previously amended) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 1, wherein said step of obtaining audience data includes ignoring a continuously viewed time of a program when the viewed time is shorter than a predetermined time.

5. (previously amended) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 1, wherein said step of

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transferring includes transmitting said data to be transferred as an HTML text document or an electronic mail.

6. (previously amended) A device for obtaining audience data on TV programs, comprising:

a program table data obtaining means for obtaining, from outside, TV program table data for an area where a viewer resides, said TV program table data including channel information and time information for each of TV programs planned to be broadcast in that area;

a first detector for detecting a channel that is being viewed by the viewer;

a second detector for detecting times at which a viewing of the channel is started and ended;

a program identification means for identifying a program ID of a currently viewed program from said TV program table data by comparing said detected channel and a current time with the channel and time information of said TV program table data;

an audience data obtaining means for obtaining audience data which include at least the program ID and viewed time information of the viewed program based on results of the detecting of times and said TV program table data, said viewed time information including at least one of (1) a view start time of each viewed program, (2) a view end time of each viewed program, and (3) a difference between the view start time and the view end time; and

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a transfer means for transferring, via the Internet to a collection center, the obtained program ID and the viewed time information along with ID data of the viewer.

7. (original) A device for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 6, wherein said program table data obtaining means automatically and regularly acquires said TV program table data by making use of the Internet or a broadcasting medium.

8. (previously amended) A device for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 6, wherein said program table data obtaining means acquires said TV program table data by making use of opportunities of the viewer's accessing the Internet.

9. (original) A device for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 6, wherein said program identification means ignores a continuously viewed time of a program when the viewed time is shorter than a predetermined time.

10. (original) A device for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 6, wherein said transfer means transmits said data to be transferred, as an HTML text document or an electronic mail.

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11. (previously amended) A recording medium storing a computer, readable program for carrying out the steps of: .

obtaining, from outside, TV program table data for an area where a viewer resides, said TV program table data including channel information and time information for each of TV programs planned to be broadcast in that area;

detecting a channel that is being viewed by the viewer;

detecting times at which a viewing of the channel is started and ended;

identifying a program ID of a currently viewed program from said TV program table data by comparing said detected channel and a current tune with the channel and time information of said TV program table data;

obtaining audience data which include at least the program ID and viewed time information of the viewed program based on said TV program table data and results of the detecting of times, said viewed time information including at least one of (1) a view start time of each viewed program, (2) a view end time of each viewed program, and (3) a difference between the view start time and the view end time; and

transferring, via the Internet to a collection center, the obtained audience data along with ID data of the viewer.

12. (previously amended) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 2, wherein said first step includes automatically obtaining said TV program table data, and

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said forth step includes automatically performing the transmission to the collection center, both by making use of opportunities of the viewer's accessing the Internet.

13. (previously amended) A device for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 7, wherein said program table data obtaining means acquires said TV program table data by making use of opportunities of the viewer's accessing the Internet.

14. (previously presented) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 1, wherein said TV program table is a matrix data table which defines program ID's of programs specified by channels in one axis of the matrix and time zones in another axis.

15. (previously presented) A device according to claim 6, wherein said TV program table is a matrix data table which defines program ID's of programs specified by channels in one axis of the matrix and time zones in another axis.

16. (previously presented) A recording medium according to claim 11, wherein said TV program table is a matrix data table which defines program ID's of programs specified by channels in one axis of the matrix and time zones in another axis.

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17. (previously presented) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs, in an audience data obtaining device which uses a computer, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining, from outside, TV program table data for an area where a viewer resides, said TV program table data including channel information and time information for each of TV programs planned to be broadcast in that area;

detecting a channel that is being viewed by the viewer;

detecting times at which a viewing of the channel is started and ended;

identifying a program ID of a currently viewed program from said TV program table data by comparing said detected channel and a current time with the channel and time information of said TV program table data;

obtaining audience data which include at least the program ID and viewed time information of the viewed program based on said TV program table data and results of the detecting of times, said viewed time information including at least one of (1) a view start time of each viewed program, (2) a view end time of each viewed program, and (3) a difference between the view start time and the view end time; and

transferring, via the Internet to a collection center, the obtained audience data along with ID data of the viewer by making use of opportunities of the viewer's accessing the Internet.

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18. (previously presented) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 17, wherein said step of transferring is performed during an operation of a WWW browsing software.

19. (previously presented) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 18, wherein unsent audience data is transmitted upon request for terminating the operation of the WWW browsing software.

20. (previously presented) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 17, further comprising a step of connecting to the Internet before the step of transferring.

21. (previously presented) A method for obtaining audience data on TV programs according to claim 17, wherein said step of obtaining TV program table data is achieved by making use of opportunities of the viewer's accessing the Internet.

22. (previously presented) A device for obtaining audience data on TV programs, comprising:

a program table data obtaining means for obtaining, from outside, TV program table data for an area where a viewer resides, said TV program table data including channel information and time information for each of TV programs planned to be broadcast in that area;

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a first detector for detecting a channel that is being viewed by the viewer;

a second detector for detecting times at which a viewing of the channel is started and ended;

a program identification means for identifying a program ID of a currently viewed program from said TV program table data by comparing said detected channel and a current time with the channel and time information of said TV program table data;

an audience data obtaining means for obtaining audience data which include at least the program ID and viewed time information of the viewed program based on results of the detecting of times and said TV program table data, said viewed time information including at least one of (1) a view start time of each viewed program, (2) a view end time of each viewed program, and (3) a difference between the view start time and the view end time; and

a transfer means for transferring, via the Internet to a collection center, the obtained program ID and the viewed time information along with ID data of the viewer by making use of opportunities of the viewer's accessing the Internet.

23. (previously presented) A device for obtaining audience data of TV programs according to claim 22, wherein said step of transferring is performed during an operation of a WWW browsing software.

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24. (previously presented) A recording medium storing a computer readable program for carrying out the steps of:

obtaining, from outside, TV program table data for an area where a viewer resides, said TV program table data including channel information and time information for each of TV programs planned to be broadcast in that area;

detecting a channel that is being viewed by the viewer;

detecting times at which a viewing of the channel is started and ended;

identifying a program ID of a currently viewed program from said TV program table data by comparing said detected channel and a current time with the channel and time information of said TV program table data;

obtaining audience data which include at least the program ID and viewed time information of the viewed program based on said TV program table data and results of the detecting of times, said viewed time information including at least one of (1) a view start time of each viewed program, (2) a view end time of each viewed program, and (3) a difference between the view start time and the view end time; and

transferring, via the Internet to a collection center, the obtained audience data along with ID data of the viewer by making use of opportunities of the viewer's accessing the Internet.

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25. (previously presented) A recording medium according to claim 24, wherein said step of transferring is performed during an operation of a WWW browsing software.